



For Immediate Release

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***CONGRESS PASSES BILL TO FIGHT PREMATURE BIRTH,
IMPROVE SERVICES FOR INFANTS AND MOTHERS, ENZI SAYS***

Washington, DC – Congress took action in the final hours of the 109th Congress to find and prevent the underlying causes of premature births by passing “Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Early (PREEMIE) Act,” U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee said.

“One in eight babies in the United States is born premature, and that number has grown in recent years,” Enzi said. “This has devastating physical, emotional, and financial effects for infants, mothers, and their families. Yet, most premature births could be prevented. This bill is a small but important step toward that goal.”

The “PREEMIE Act,” S. 707, is designed to expand research into causes of and prevention of premature births, and to increase education and support services related to prematurity. The bill passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate unanimously.

“By expanding, intensifying, and coordinating research into premature births, this bill will aim to reduce rates of premature delivery, promote evidence-based care and treatment for women and infants, and reduce infant mortality and disabilities caused by prematurity,” Enzi said.

“I want to thank Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), who sponsored the PREEMIE bill, for his leadership on this issue,” Enzi added. “As a parent and a grandparent, I appreciate his efforts to expand research into premature labor, get information out to expecting mothers, and provide care and support for pre-term infants and their families.”

Key provisions of the bill include:

- Expanding, intensifying, and coordinating federal research related to preterm labor and delivery, treatment, and outcomes of preterm and low birth weight infants;

- Awarding health care provider education and support service grants to improve the provision of information on prematurity to providers and pregnant women at-risk for pre-term delivery;
- Awarding demonstration project grants to improve the treatment and outcomes for babies born prematurely;
- Establishing an Interagency Coordinating Council on Prematurity and Low Birth weight; and,
- Requiring the Surgeon General to hold a conference on pre-term birth to establish an agenda for activities in both public and private sectors that will speed the identification of, and treatments for, the causes of pre-term labor and delivery, and to report this agenda to Congress.

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